

MERRY-GO-ROUND

By Drew Pearson

(The author of this column is given the widest latitude. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Mirror.)

WASHINGTON, July 10—

Unrest in Ecuador has shown a marked upturn among the laboring class and other low-paid groups, following a presidential decree granting salary increases to all workers except those earning 500 sucres (\$28.50) per month or less.

This curious discrimination leaves nearly half the country's employed citizens with unchanged wages—at a time when living costs are mounting at an average rate of 4 percent monthly.

A United Nations survey, released last year, gave \$40 as the mean annual income per capita for Ecuadorians. This is the lowest in the Western Hemisphere. President Velasco Ibarra's new decree, by passing over some 600,000 farm and factory workers at the bottom of the pay scale, will have little or no effect on that figure.

Meanwhile, conflict among discordant elements within the administration has brought on a rash of political rumors throughout the Republic. These have made the government so jittery that mounted patrols of national police are now everywhere in evidence after dark, armed with submachine guns.

There is constant talk of a revolutionary conspiracy, headed by Eduardo Salazar Gomez, national chairman of the Liberal Party and briefly a candidate in last year's presidential campaign. (He dropped out two months before the election.)

Competent observers are agreed that these reports have no basis in fact. Rather, they reflect the state of uncertainty and discontent prevailing today in the little South American republic which, during U. S.-educated Galo Plaza's term as chief executive, enjoyed the only four years of stable, democratic government in its otherwise turbulent history.

Supercabinet Agency

MOST PEOPLE don't know much about the ultra secret National Security Council. However, it operates as a sort of super-cabinet dealing with defense problems, and since President Eisenhower's inauguration, it has handed down 130 basic decisions, including "striking changes" in American policy toward the wars in Korea and Indo-China. Before the end of the year it expects to reach a record 300 decisions that will lead this nation either to peace or war.

Recently the Senate Appropriations Committee was given an official backstage peek at the nation's most powerful agency

when President Eisenhower sent his special assistant on Security Council matters, Robert Cutler, to Capitol Hill for a confidential briefing. Within the limits of security, this column can report what he told them.

Minnesota's GOP Senator Ed Thyne started it off by asking: "What is the nature of the questions that you study?"

"One question that the council has been giving a great deal of attention to this Winter," Cutler replied, "has been the basic over-all policy of the United States toward the wars in French Indo-China and Korea, reviewing the basic policy, seeing to what extent it should be modified."

"We held a great many hearings, had a great many council meetings and eventually we recommended to the council, and it was approved in May, a new basic policy paper which represents striking changes from what had previously been in effect."

The exact nature of these changes cannot be printed without tipping off the Russians.

Cutler also revealed that the National Security Council is working on nine coordinated security programs, and went into detail about internal port security.

"There is an internal security problem of the greatest importance to the United States in its continental defense, that involves 10 or 11 different departments and agencies of the Federal government," he stated. "If we are going to develop a program with reference to the security of our harbors, we must receive at the planning board level studies for the different departments and agencies."

"You just could not rely on the Coast Guard alone?" asked Senator Carl Hayden, Arizona Democrat.

Cutler replied that it required an over-all, integrated program.

Cutler stressed that the President considers the security council meetings so important that he, personally, has presided over every session.

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